

**REMARKS**

The Official Action mailed December 31, 2002 has been received and its contents carefully noted. Filed concurrently herewith is a *Request for One Month Extension of Time*, which extends the shortened statutory period for response to April 30, 2003. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that this response is being timely filed.

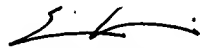
The Applicant notes with appreciation the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on February 1, 2001, September 30, 2002, and October 31, 2002.

Claims 1-14 were pending in the present application. New claims 42-53 have been added to recite additional protection to which the Applicant is entitled. Claims 1-14 and 42-53 are now pending in the present application, of which claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 42, 46 and 50 are independent. For the reasons set forth in detail below, all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance.

The Official Action rejects claims 1-14 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,440,423 to Ogura. The Applicants respectfully submit that an anticipation rejection cannot be maintained against the independent claims of the present invention. Ogura does not teach all the elements of the independent claims, either explicitly or inherently. Independent claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 11 recite two reflectors for splitting a laser beam (see, for example, 1106 and 1107 in Figs. 1A and 1B). The Official Action asserts that Ogura teaches two reflectors 12, 13, 16, 17 for splitting a laser beam 11 (p. 2, Paper No. 10). However, the Applicant respectfully submits that the paraboloid mirrors 12, 13 and the plain mirror 16 in Ogura do not split the laser beam. Only one feature of Ogura, the reflection type homogenizer 17, appears to split the laser beam. Ogura does not teach two reflectors for splitting the laser beam. Since Ogura does not teach all the elements of the independent claims, either explicitly or inherently, an anticipation rejection cannot be maintained. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is in order and respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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